## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## TSUMAMI - Relief organizations provide, receive support

MARINE CORPS BASE, CAMP S.D. BUTLER, OKINAWA, Japan - III Marine Expeditionary Commanding General and Joint Task Force-536 Commander Lt. Gen. Robert R. Blackman expressed his sincere condolences for the loss of life and suffering caused by the earthquake and subsequent tsunamis in the regions of Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

The State Department established a 24-hour task force with a toll-free number, (888) 407-4747, to respond to the crisis. Up-to-date information is also available at <a href="http://travel.state.gov">http://travel.state.gov</a> or by calling 317-472-2328 for inquires from overseas. The State Department continues to monitor the welfare of American citizens affected by this disaster and is providing updated information on the conditions of the affected areas.

Embassies in the affected areas are assisting American citizens with return travel arrangements to the U.S. The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok also has personnel searching for any missing Americans in Thailand.

The United States Agency for International Development has provided \$100,000 in immediate assistance to Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Other provisions donated by USAID include survival kits, potable water, emergency shelters and support of search and rescue operations. The agency encourages and accepts donations through the "How Can I Help" section of their Web site at www.usaid.gov <a href="http://www.usaid.gov">http://www.usaid.gov</a> or by calling the Center for International Disaster Information at (703) 276-1914.

The donations allow agency professionals to procure exact items needed, reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes and warehouse space, and support the economy of the disaster-stricken region.

The III Marine Expeditionary Force and Joint Task Force-536 will be engaged in supporting any regional relief operations by providing possible lift, rescue and humanitarian efforts.

More information on making donations and volunteering can be found at www.interaction.org <a href="http://www.reliefweb.org">http://www.reliefweb.org</a> <a href="http://www.reliefweb.org">http://www.reliefweb.org</a>.